



Bureau Sostenemi gets pro-active with the “Tuma Accion” campaign

On Wednesday, December 13, the Director of the Bureau Sostenemi, Lenny Geervliet together with the Minister of Education and Social Affairs, Marisol Lopez -Tromp met with the press to point out an issue of concern to all the community. Bureau Sostenemi is the government organization that administrates the various foundations concerned with all aspects of child abuse, and they have initiated a campaign of public awareness to assist them in battling this problem.

Although Aruba has foundations such as Respetami and the Youth Hotline that deal directly with reaching out and educating the public, Bureau Sostenemi has the job of recording and coordinating these efforts so that the proper reporting, recording and tracking of incidents can be done. Additionally, it is the job of the bureau to see that each case is handle by the proper foundation, as various groups deal with various aspects of abuse, and also the degree.

Lenny Geervliet pointed out that child abuse can be physical or sexual, but also can entail neglect; emotionally or physically. There are many who observe this abuse but are not aware that it is taking place, or if they do, have no idea who to contact or how they can help. The Bureau Sostenemi offers various ways to contact them for advice, including their phone number 588-2984 or by e-mail sostenemi@yahoo.com. They will provide the information for recognizing symptoms of abuse by the behavior of the child, and also will send a social worker to investigate.

On Wednesday, Lenny Geervliet also presented to Minister Lopez-Tromp a sticker with a special “hotline” number for the “Tuma Accion!” (Take Action!) campaign, which is 588-1010. The point of “Tuma Accion!” is for each member of the community to become aware and accept their responsibility in combating the issue of abuse, and making it easy for individuals to contact the proper authorities. Bureau Sostenemi promises handle each case discretely and confidentially.

Minister Lopez-Tromp emphasized the importance of community cooperation in the war against child abuse, and the importance of the proper reporting of incidents. Abuse will continue as long as individuals ignore the plight of suffering children, which makes them guilty parties also. It is up to every individual to join this fight, and to work with Bureau Sostenemi and the various foundations to stop the incidences of abuse, whatever kind.